

Abstract of the Invention

A method and apparatus for the evaluation of sleep disorders is disclosed.

Two sensors are used to diagnose and usefully characterize abnormal sleep breathing, a sensor of tracheal vibration, and a sensor of axial body position. The two sensors are attached to the patient in locations substantially adjacent to one another. In a preferred embodiment, these two sensors can be physically combined into a single unit, thereby increasing further the simplicity and reliability of attaching the sensors to the patient. The unit is applied to a patient near a tracheal segment, preferably at a suprasternal notch location.

The position sensor has two axes of sensitivity that are at angles to each other so that the sensor may determine which of four positions it is in relative to gravity. When attached to the patient, the sensor is oriented so that it may be determined whether the patient is oriented in a supine, prone, left lateral decubitus, or right lateral decubitus position. Data are recorded from both sensors concurrently, preferably over a period of time of several hours, and stored in a recording device, preferably containing a non-volatile memory, so that the data may be reviewed later for diagnosis and characterization.